



Community Food Initiatives

2012 Annual Report

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Executive Summary

Community Food Initiatives and our Athens County community celebrates a very productive 2012 when it comes to growing and sharing the local food harvest. A year of transition became a year of new opportunities and the momentum continues to build as we move into 2013.

Former Director, Ronda Clark, whose dedicated and inspired leadership over an eight year period built CFI into a pillar Athens organization, stepped down to focus on homeschooling her children and running Blackberry Sage Farm. Mary Nally was hired by the Board of Directors, becoming the new Director in April. She is focused on increasing scope, reach and effectiveness of CFI programs, internal systems management, building fiscal strength and solidifying the roles of staff and volunteers.

The beloved Duane Bogart, former Donation Station Program Director, transitioned from employee to volunteer in order to spend more quality time with his granddaughter, Kiera. In his place, Erik Peterson, a stellar volunteer, was hired and has implemented efficiency improvements in staff time and effectiveness in outreach to both vendor donors and food pantry coordinators.

The AmeriCorps/ComCorps Service Members succeeded in a productive year marked by consistently working as a team to support one another in their program areas. Volunteers are now coordinated to step in when help is needed, offering opportunities for students and community members to feel a part of the action. CFI also benefited from excellent OU Interns: Eden Kinkaid is developing a seed saving how-to guide for publication in 2013; Eric Sturgell surveyed members on how we can improve the workshop series and is developing workshop lesson plans; and Thomas Cleary evaluated program areas and made a report on the YEAH Kids program using survey data he compiled.

Thanks to incredible support from our community, the impact Community Food Initiatives had in 2012 was astounding and we are honored to continue serving this area to be strong, resilient, and ensure everyone has access to the best local food.

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The Programs

Community Gardens

CFI's community gardens started out with a bang in 2012 with the addition of the fast growing Eastside Community Garden. A collection of experienced and novice gardeners took great pride and ownership of their plots, even through the summer heat and windstorms.



The Nelsonville Community Garden is boasting a new tool shed, built and installed by Hocking College students. Soon, we'll have tools to fill it!

The Athens Public Library children's librarian continues to hold down the fort at the Chauncey Community Garden, involving the youth to discover and learn.

In collaboration with Hocking Athens Perry Community Action (HAPCAP), the Glouster Community Garden saw an upswing of activity with Work-and-Learn participants joining the garden.

The Stewart Community Garden plugged along through the year and CFI is currently working with our partner, the Federal Valley Resource Center, to assess community interest and increase participation.

Hope Drive, an Athens Metropolitan Housing Authority low-income housing complex, saw yet another fruitful year. Six adult residents accepted free plant starts and seeds for patio gardening, and one adult resident developed a large garden plot, sharing excess produce with his neighbors.

YEAH Kids

The YEAH Program (Youth Entrepreneurs At Hope) had seven active members, and several younger apprentices. Participants worked in the Spring setting up their garden and planting, spent the Summer watering, weeding and chasing away rabbits. YEAH went to market beginning July 28th through September 29th and made over \$800 gross profits. In October, the youth worked to put their garden to bed for the Winter.

CFI's intern, Thomas Cleary, surveyed the youth and their parents on the program's impact. Parents reported changes in eating habits, work ethic and in the home. "It has given her better attitude in school and around social events," reported one parent.

COMMUNITY GARDEN IMPACTS OF 2012

▲ COMMUNITY GARDENS

CFI had over **50** community gardeners in six garden locations

▲ WORKSHOPS

CFI hosted **32** workshops on gardening and cooking workshops

▲ YEAH KIDS

The Youth Entrepreneurs at Hope Drive Apartments made over **\$800** selling their produce at the Athens Farmers Market



"I like participating in the garden because it helps the earth, making it a better place. Also, it gives me more time to get out and have fun with other kids in the garden. It's changed my life and I hope it changes other kids, too," said Taylor, one of the YEAH participants, age 12.

Seed Saving, Swap, Inventory and Give-Away

The Seed Saving Inventory became a downloadable PDF document on the CFI website in 2012, increasing its accessibility. The annual Seed Swap yet again saw strong participation and word on the garden path is that more and more people are interested in learning seed saving techniques. To this effect, CFI Intern, Eden Kinkaid is currently developing a basic how-to guide that will be ready for distribution in 2013. Staff estimate at least 1,000 people benefited from the annual free seed give-away in 2012.

Workshop Series

CFI's workshop series covered a myriad of topics from basic gardening subjects to revealing the culinary secrets of canning and krauting. CFI members and friends were surveyed so that in 2013 CFI will offer workshops on the high-interest topics and set a regular schedule for the workshops during the most convenient times.



Donation Station

Sharing the Harvest

The Donation Station had a remarkable year, faced with increased demand from food pantries that anecdotally reported an increase in pantry patrons suffering from the poor economy. Thankfully, the community yet again rose to the occasion and we broke our record goal of donations with a total of over 44,000 pounds distributed!

The Donation Station also had great partnerships with Good Works during their summer meal program in The Plains, feeding hundreds of children and adults daily during school break. The Athens City-County Health Department and Live Healthy Appalachia collaborated extensively with Donation Station staff throughout the year, and ended it with "Operation Green String," a healthy food drive for SE Ohio Regional Food Bank.



TOTAL SPENT AT THE ATHENS FARMERS MARKET	TOTAL SPENT AT THE CHESTERHILL PRODUCE AUCTION	TOTAL POUNDS DISRIBUTED	NUMBER OF PANTRIES AND AGENCIES DISTRIBUTING DONATION STATION FOOD
\$14,683.45	\$1,655.95	44,302.99 lbs	35



Top Ten Places DS Food Went in 2012

1. Feed My Sheep Food Pantry 6129.30 lbs
2. Live Healthy Appalachia (Food Pantry Project and Operation Green String) 4015.88 lbs
3. Appalachian Community VNA & Hospice 3112.57 lbs
4. Good Works 2865.70 lbs
5. Athens County Children Services 2802 lbs
6. Bishopville Food Pantry 2332.69 lbs
7. United Campus Ministry 2311.25 lbs
8. Athens Community Church Food Pantry 2000.64 lbs
9. Plains United Methodist Church Food Pantry 1598.54 lbs
10. Salvation Army Food Pantry 1505.62 lbs

Farm to Cafeteria

Discovery Garden

The Farm to Cafeteria program underwent some changes in 2012, with the intent to increase the impact and number of people served. The Discovery Garden (formerly Edible Schoolyards) Program continues to work with Trimble School District and now is focused on:

- 1) one after-school program with Big Brothers Big Sisters,
- 2) renewing regular maintenance of school gardens, and
- 3) working with school teachers to offer resources for curriculum integration and outdoor learning opportunities.

Because of at least a year of the gardens lying fallow, much of 2012 was a clean-up effort and laying the groundwork for future success.



Discovery Kitchen



Inspired by a collaborative pilot project with the Athens City-County Health Department, Live Healthy Appalachia, Rural Action and O'Bleness, the new Discovery Kitchen Program offers cooking and nutrition workshops to food pantry patrons using seasonal Donation Station food. This is the missing link to ensure that our community is food secure and healthy: kitchen re-skilling.

Focused first on pantries and agencies that already distribute Donation Station food, these workshops focus on educating participants on avoiding foods that are highly processed, high in fat, sodium and sweeteners, and explaining how what we eat impacts our health. Each lesson will include at least one recipe demonstration, using seasonal foods.

FARM TO CAFETERIA IMPACT

▲ YOUTH EDUCATION

CFI taught **499** students in Athens County cooking and nutrition lessons

▲ FOOD SAMPLES

Over **2,260** fresh food samples were provided to school children, introducing new foods

Membership & Support

CFI had an increase in active members in 2012, with the momentum building up to our Harvest Dinner event that packed the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in October. Local graphic designer, Kevin Morgan was brought on to design the new logo. Fresh faces and fresh signage and professionalism have been themes throughout 2012 as CFI matures into a new stage of growth and success.



Grants from foundations and municipal entities are key to CFI's ongoing success. Sisters of St. Joseph Charitable Fund, Whole Kids Foundation, the Athens Foundation, Athens Metropolitan Housing Authority, City of Athens, the Wallace Foundation and UNICEF all contributed to the 2012 CFI budget.

2012 IN BRIEF

▲ MEMBERSHIP

CFI now has **172** active members (compared to 108 in early 2012)

▲ DONATION STATION

The Donation Station received **\$20,486.05** from community members in 2012.

▲ COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Local community support covered an enormous portion of the budget for 2012, with **\$34,542.61** raised from membership, garden and workshop fees, fundraising and sales

▲ GRANT SUPPORT

\$46,300 was awarded to CFI by grants and municipal entities in 2012

LOOKING AHEAD: NEW GOALS FOR 2013

COMMUNITY GARDENS

- Assist Carriage Hill in a building a community garden
- Supply all gardens with tools, a tool shed, picnic table, and regular work parties
- Increase number of gardeners by at least 30%
- Collaborate with Ohio University on high tunnel and seed saving project
- Collaborate with Athens Health Department and others to provide training for gardeners to vend at farmers markets
- Develop strategic plan for maintenance and expansion of existing community orchards

DONATION STATION

- Increase total pounds distributed to at least 50,000 lbs
- Incorporate Discovery Kitchen program into Donation Station
- Develop replicable model for programs to market to other local food communities in Appalachia

FARM TO CAFETERIA

- Expand Discovery Garden program to support all Athens County school garden projects
- Compile the best resources available for school garden curriculum integration
- Develop a set of best practices for school gardens as resource for local schools



Board of Directors

Tom Redfern, President ♦ Maureen Burns-Hooker, Vice-President & Secretary
♦ Nancy Pierce, Treasurer ♦ Milena Miller ♦ Penny Shelton ♦ Don Shamblin ♦ Greg Broadhurst
♦ Lee Gregg ♦ Natalie Woodrooffe ♦ Barbara Fisher

Staff

Mary Nally, Executive Director
Erik Peterson, Donation Station Manager
Badger Johnson, Community Garden Coordinator AmeriCorps Service Member
Nicole Shanks, Farm to Cafeteria Coordinator AmeriCorps Service Member
Jenn Thompson, Donation Station Coordinator AmeriCorps Service Member